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The Effect of Kinship Foster Care Compared to Non-Kinship Foster Care on Resiliency

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THE EFFECT OF KINSHIP FOSTER CARE COMPARED TO NON-KINSHIP FOSTER CARE ON RESILIENCY

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PATIENT CARE ISSUE

An estimated 40% to 60% of children in foster care have clinically significant emotional or behavioral problems.¹ Research shows that placement type may have an impact on a child’s socioemotional resiliency and level of access to needed mental health services.^{2,3,4} In order to provide quality care to foster children in the healthcare setting, it is important to know the effect placement type has on a child’s individual needs.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE QUESTION

QUESTION: In foster children who have been removed from their biological families, what is the effect of kinship foster care compared to non-kinship foster care on resiliency?

POPULATION: Foster Children

INTERVENTION: Kinship Foster Care

“The formal placement of children removed from their familial homes with persons related to the child through blood, marriage, or adoption.”⁵

COMPARISON: Non-Kinship Foster Care

“The formal placement of children with adults who are licensed by the local child welfare authority to provide care for wards of state.”⁵

OUTCOME: Resiliency

The capacity of a child to recover from disruptive and potentially traumatic experiences by means of psychosocial supports and adequate economic resources.

REGISTERED NURSE INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED WITH AN RN FROM THE PICU AT DAYTON CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL:

- There is an observed difference in the way foster children versus children raised in their biological families receive care and develop trusting relationships with healthcare professionals.
- Due to placement instability and detachment, foster children who do not trust their caregivers have a more difficult time physically and mentally functioning in a healthcare setting.
- Due to government funding and increased access to medical services, children in non-kinship foster care tend to receive higher quality healthcare than children living with kin.

SEARCH METHODS

DATABASES UTILIZED: CINAHL, Cochrane Database of Systemic Reviews, Consumer Health Complete, EBSCOHost, Medline, PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, SocINDEX, Vocational Studies Premier

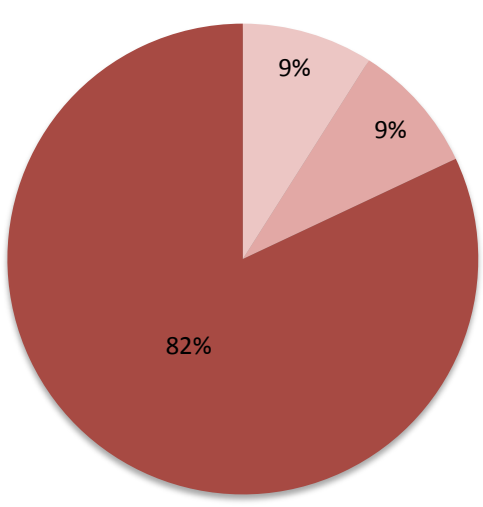
KEYWORDS SEARCHED: Foster care, Foster children, Kinship foster care, Non-kinship foster care, Resilience, Socioemotional

INCLUSION CRITERIA: Assessed effect of placement type on child well being, Full text, Published in the last 15 years

EXCLUSION CRITERIA: Full text not available, Unavailable in library database, Published before 2002

RESULTS

LEVELS OF EVIDENCE AND TYPES OF ARTICLES INCLUDED



■ LEVEL 1 - SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (3)

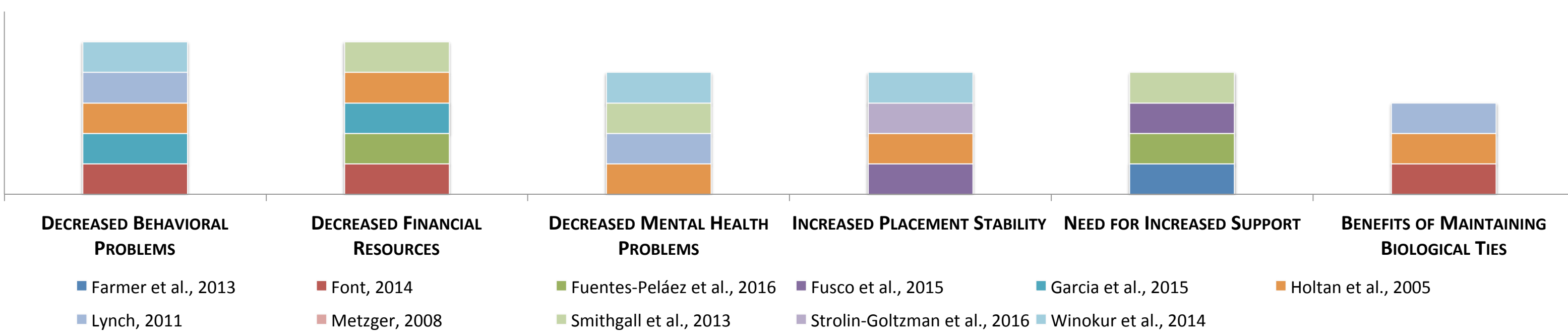
■ LEVEL 4 - COHORT (13)

■ LEVEL 6 - DESCRIPTIVE (1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12)

The search terms "kinship foster care" and "non-kinship foster care" yielded 942 results. The 11 articles chosen are listed above and were critiqued using critical appraisal tools published by the Joanna Briggs Institute.

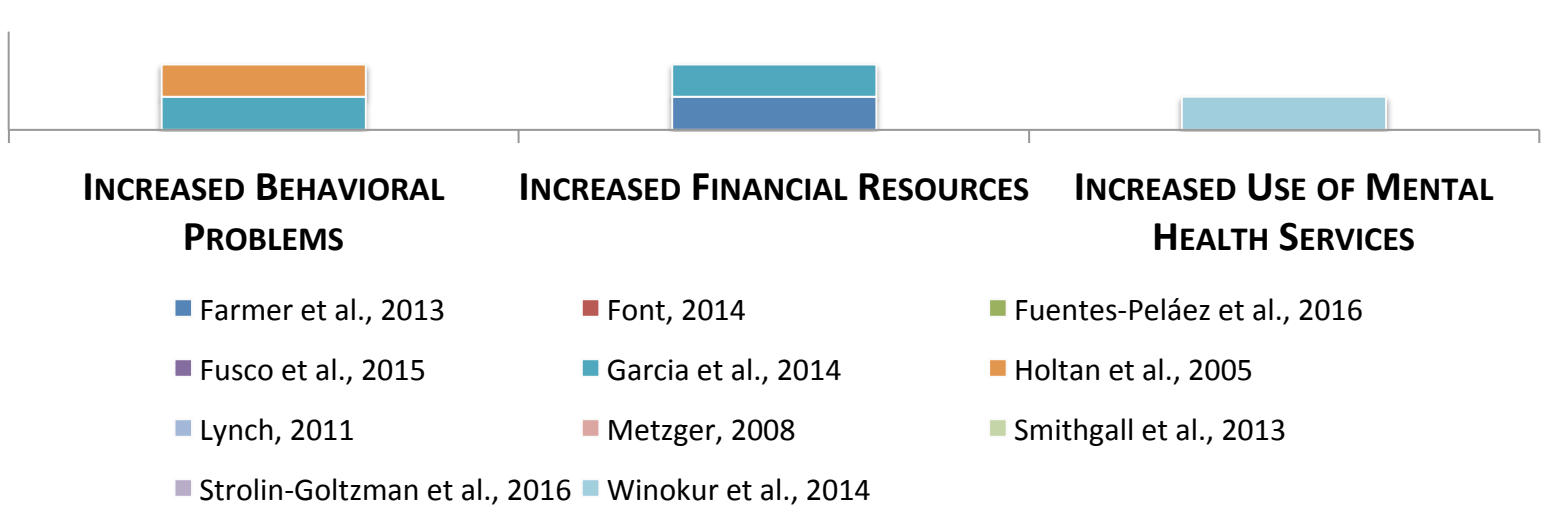
SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN KINSHIP FOSTER CARE



Studies generally show that there are benefits to kinship foster care evidenced by decreased behavioral problems, decreased mental health problems, increased placement stability, and maintenance of biological ties. These benefits occur despite decreased financial resources and a need for increased support within kinship foster families.

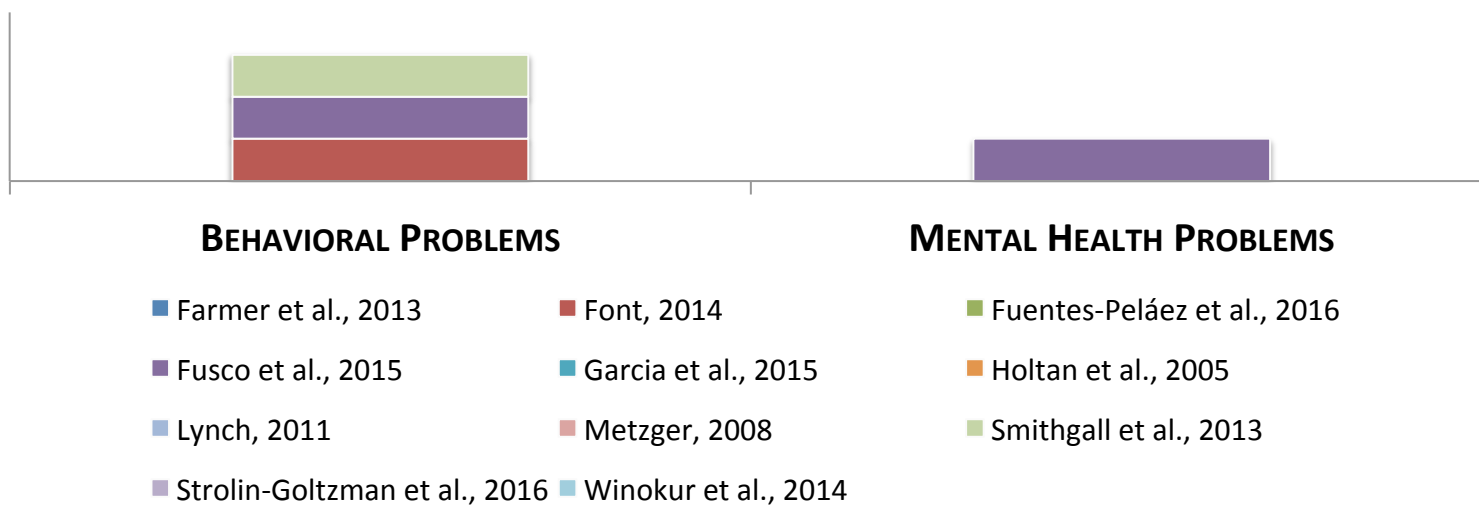
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN NON-KINSHIP FOSTER CARE



Studies generally show that there are benefits to non-kinship foster care such as increased financial resources and utilization of mental health services. These benefits must be weighed against the risk for increased behavioral problems that occur with non-kinship foster care.

MIXED OUTCOMES

(NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KINSHIP AND NON-KINSHIP)



Approximately ¼ of our articles reported no significant difference in behavioral or mental health problems among children between the two types of foster care.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- The EPB model used to guide this project was the IOWA Model of EBP to Promote Quality of Care.⁶
- Kinship foster care may be able to promote the socioemotional resilience of a child by maintaining biological attachment and stability.^{7,8,9}
- Non-kinship foster care may be able to promote economic resilience of a child by offering properly trained caregivers and historically increased resources.¹⁰
- The most effective placement type for a child needs to be determined based on his individual set of needs. There is no definitive answer to which placement type has a greater effect on child resiliency. Therefore, more research is needed because of an insufficient evidence base.

LIMITATIONS

It was difficult to assess the effects of one placement type due to the transient nature of foster home placements as the children in these studies moved frequently between kinship and non-kinship foster homes. Based on the subjectivity of this research question and the definitions of outcomes, the amount of high level evidence was limited.

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